

## **I. Public Affairs' Functional Role, Mission, and Relationship to the NASA Strategic Plan**

The Office of Public Affairs is one of 16 Functional Offices reporting directly to the NASA Administrator. The Associate Administrator works within the framework of the NASA management structure identified in the NASA Strategic Management Handbook to convey accurately to the American public the policy and content of Agency programs.

Derived from the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958, the mission of the Office of Public Affairs is to provide for the widest practicable and appropriate dissemination of information to the media and general public concerning NASA activities and results. Some of the key services provided by Public Affairs include:

- advisory services and consultation to the Administrator on issues concerning communications and relations with the media and the general public
- policy guidance, advice, and consultation to Headquarters Program Offices (Codes M, R, S, U, and Y), Functional Offices, and NASA Field Installations on public affairs issues
- Agencywide programs and activities to coordinate and direct resources to the news media and the American public
- open and credible communication channels to the news media and the general public

## **II. Programs, Services, and Functional Initiatives**

As with other NASA Offices, the Office of Public Affairs strives to be customer-driven, focusing its activities toward reaching and serving the American media and general public. In addition to internal management policies, general trends in how Americans receive news and information and specific feedback about NASA's public affairs activities from those key constituents help shape the direction of this Office.

Using an organization structure unique to the Office of Public Affairs, a cadre of seasoned Public Affairs Officers (PAO's) is co-located within the Program Offices and the Office of External Relations. This arrangement allows the PAO's to convey policies and plans of the Office of Public Affairs to their respective offices while gaining information and insights about Agencywide programs. The PAO's are, in effect, the agents of the Associate Administrator for Public Affairs in all public affairs matters concerning the Program Offices and serve as the primary public affairs advisors to the Associate Administrators to whom they are assigned.

Other significant responsibilities of the PAO's include the development of integrated, Center-coordinated public affairs plans for their respective Program Offices. Some of these plans are mission or event specific, while others are thematic or broad in scope.

The PAO's are responsible for publicly released materials such as news releases, fact sheets, and press kits. This responsibility includes preparing and reviewing the materials, as well as obtaining clearances from the appropriate Program Offices or Functional Offices. The close proximity of the PAO's to program officials increases accessibility, facilitates information flow, and engenders trust and mutual respect. This arrangement also accounts for the close working relationship between the PAO's and their Center counterparts and ensures a well-coordinated public affairs plan for Agency programs and projects.

The Office of Public Affairs is organized around the programs it manages. Those programs aimed at reaching the public through the media are managed through the Media Services Division; those aimed at reaching the public directly are administered through the Public Services Division. The key programs, products, and services from these Divisions are summarized below.

## **MEDIA SERVICES DIVISION**

This Division distributes news and information to the media employing the most efficient and effective methods available to the Agency. The professional staff within the Media Services Division also provides public affairs support for the following Functional Offices: Equal Opportunity Programs, Human Resources and Education, Procurement, Policy and Plans, Chief Engineer, Chief Financial Officer, and Safety and Mission Assurance.

### **Media Products/Services**

#### **News Releases**

Coordinates the flow of national-level news releases through the review and editing cycle in the Headquarters Newsroom. Works with responsible Headquarters PAO's to set a date and time of releases, and coordinates the release of accompanying video, photographs, or Internet offerings. The Newsroom also coordinates other forms of information release, including Notes-to-Editors and Video Advisories.

#### **Press Kits**

Assists PAO's in editing and producing mission press kits. Coordinates reproduction of hard copies and posts electronic versions to the NASA Home Page.

#### **News Distribution**

Maintains extensive electronic mail and facsimile (fax) lists for reaching news media and the general public. These include media electronic-mail lists for text and television products and a large (32,500+) general public subscriber list. Also maintains a comprehensive fax list for national and local media organized by region for specific delivery of news and information.

## **NASA Television (NASA TV)**

### **NASA TV Operations**

Provides overall policy guidance and direction for content and operation of NASA TV. Maintains close interaction with public affairs offices at NASA Field Installations and with coordinating bodies such as the NASA TV Working Group and the NASA Digital TV Working Group.

### **NASA TV Video File**

Provides overall direction and scheduling for airing Video File -- b-roll packages -- on NASA TV. Provides guidance to the Field Installations on production values and techniques. Edits inputs from the Field Installations and schedules airing of Video File elements on NASA TV.

### **Live Shots**

Provides overall direction and scheduling of live shots -- live satellite interviews on NASA TV originating from NASA Headquarters and NASA Field Installations with Agency spokespersons and television stations around the country. Coordinates and staffs approximately 15 Headquarters-sponsored live shots/year for major Agency events.

### **NASA TV Digital Transition**

Provides planning and policy oversight for, and maintains membership on, the NASA Digital Television Working Group, charged with planning the transition of NASA TV from NTSC (analog) to digital broadcast by late 2004.

## **Internet/New Media**

### **NASA Home Page**

Manages the "front door" to NASA on the World Wide Web (Web). Maintains links to all major NASA programs and organizations from this main address. Provides frequent updates on NASA activities and programs and advocates new technologies for reaching the general public through the Internet.

### **Streaming Video**

Coordinates Public Affairs requirements for transmitting NASA TV over the Web.

### **NASA Photo Archive Digital Transition**

Coordinates Agency planning for establishing an Internet-based digital photo archive for access by the news media and the general public. Coordinates the activities of the Agency Photo Working Group for transitioning the bulk of NASA's photo archive from analog to digital.

## **Internal Services/Coordination**

### **Daily Clipping Service**

Provides daily compendium of news clippings about NASA programs to NASA senior management.

### **Daily Video Monitoring Service**

Provides daily compendium of stories about NASA programs aired in local television markets around the country. Information is provided to NASA senior management at Headquarters and to Public Affairs personnel at the Field Installations.

### **Minority Outreach**

Plans, coordinates, and supports a minority outreach program to relay news about Agency accomplishments to traditionally under-represented audiences.

## **PUBLIC SERVICES DIVISION**

The Public Services Division is responsible for managing and administering programs aimed at reaching the general public. These programs are grouped as follows:

### **Speakers**

#### **Astronaut Appearances**

Schedules and, where required, staffs foreign and domestic astronaut appearances in coordination with the Astronaut Office at Johnson Space Center. Foreign astronaut appearances are also coordinated with the Office of External Relations.

#### **Speakers Bureau**

Identifies and schedules talented NASA employees to speak to organizations throughout the country on NASA's programs and activities.

### **Images**

#### **Artifacts**

Coordinates the transfer and display of NASA artifacts; works with the National Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian Institution, with whom NASA has an agreement for artifacts exhibition and maintenance.

#### **Exhibits**

Coordinates Agencywide exhibits for NASA Headquarters and Field Centers; manages the planning, design, fabrication, installation, and contract monitoring of exhibits for major national and international exhibitions. International exhibitions are coordinated with the Office of External Relations.

**Fine Arts**

Plans and directs the artistic documentation of significant NASA projects and activities. This program involves identifying and commissioning qualified artists to record their impressions of Agency events. Works in the collection are on public display at NASA Visitor Centers, NASA Headquarters and Field Installations, and through traveling exhibitions.

**Graphic Arts**

Establishes and coordinates the overall NASA Graphic Arts Program to ensure the effective and standardized use of NASA graphics identifications, such as names, logos and insignia. This office approves various identifying designs for Agency programs and missions. This office also serves as the primary point of contact on the commercial use of Agency identifications.

**Events****Guest Operations**

Plans and manages guest operations for Space Shuttle launches and landings and expendable launch vehicle launches. This activity includes allocating Agencywide guest quotas, preparing and mailing invitations, coordinating pre-launch tours and briefings, and arranging distinguished guest accommodations.

**Special Events**

Plans, coordinates, and implements such special Agency events as anniversaries, White House and Congressional ceremonies, visits by heads of state to NASA facilities, and other major functions. Visits by heads of state are coordinated with the Office of External Relations.

**Outreach Initiatives**

Coordinates with Program Offices/Enterprises and directs resources within Public Affairs to communicate to the general public the relevance and excitement of NASA's unique missions and discoveries. In coordination with NASA Headquarters Program and Functional Offices, as well as NASA Field Installations, develops messages and communication strategies to reach specific segments of the population, including women, minorities, students, the elderly, etc.

**Public Information****Freedom of Information**

Provides prompt access to Agency records, unless they are exempt from release due to one of nine Federal exemptions, to any individual requesting the information.

**Correspondence**

Receives, assigns, distributes, and tracks all mail for the Office of Public Affairs.

### **III. Functional Goals, Implementation Strategies, and Metrics**

The Office of Public Affairs Functional Leadership Plan outlines the future direction of NASA's Public Affairs activities. The functional goals, implementation strategies, and metrics described in the plan were developed with a customer-driven focus and the conviction that we will continue to improve and build on the outcome of this plan of action. The following are the strategic goals, implementation strategies and metrics within the key functional areas of Public Affairs.

#### **News Operations**

##### **Goal:**

To provide for the widest practicable dissemination of knowledge on NASA's activities in keeping with the tenets of the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958 and the NASA Strategic Plan.

##### **Implementation Strategies:**

Utilize technical expertise in transmitting information via satellite, Internet, and e-mail to provide the best use of resources in meeting the information needs of the news media and the general public.

Coordinate release of information to media, with provision for a strategic understanding of news media deadlines and news cycles.

Promote clear and effective writing and presentation of information.

##### **Metrics:**

NASA's Office of Public Affairs, working with the Office of Headquarters Operations, will produce five Webcasts per quarter, either of NASA TV news productions or of dedicated Webcasts.

NASA's Office of Public Affairs will work with the Office of Headquarters Operations to develop a pilot proposal for "MyNASA," a customizable version of the NASA Home Page, which will allow users to select the kinds of news and information they want from the Agency.

## **Public Outreach**

### **Goal:**

To provide for enhanced public understanding of NASA's activities and accomplishments using NASA TV, the Internet, and the media.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

Maintain strong satellite interview program for local television stations around the country, using resources of NASA TV.

Establish radio interview program to provide NASA expertise and perspective on issues in science, technology, and exploration.

### **Metrics:**

Increase the baseline for Public Affairs live satellite interview programs to no less than 15 live shots per month. (Public Affairs periodically makes NASA astronauts, program managers, and other Agency officials available for live satellite interviews via NASA TV.)

By second quarter, FY01, employ Internet monitoring techniques for evaluating usage of Web site offerings.

## **Digital Transition Programs**

### **Goal:**

To provide enhanced information access to the public and more efficient means of storage and retrieval of digital images.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

Pursue and implement cost-effective commercial partnerships where possible.

Organize Division resources to provide strong expertise in Internet techniques and state-of-the-art digital storage and retrieval systems.

Maintain NASA Public Affairs at the forefront of communications techniques by fully utilizing new and emerging technologies.

Organize comprehensive Agencywide approaches to digitization to promote more cost-effective methods and ease of use by the public.

### **Metrics:**

Digitize 2,000 of NASA's best photos and place on the NASA Image Exchange Web site by the first quarter of FY01.

Implement the transition of NASA TV from analog to High Definition Television by the fourth quarter of FY04.

Develop commercial partnerships for the conversion of NASA analog video and film archives to High Definition formats by the fourth quarter of FY04.

### **Exhibit Program**

#### **Goal:**

Inspire and inform the general public, students, and teachers by enabling them to interact, learn about, and experience NASA's missions in a direct and tangible way.

#### **Functional Implementation Strategies:**

Incorporate the latest, interactive technology in the design and production of new exhibits.

Develop exhibits with captivating and informative graphics and images, staffing them with articulate and engaging personnel.

Collaborate with NASA's Education Division to ensure the exhibit program reaches students in an informal capacity.

Focus messages to communicate the impact NASA programs have on people's lives; for example, medical research, telecommunications, healthcare, and consumer products.

#### **Metrics:**

Update the Enterprises' exhibits annually, support no fewer than 800 portable exhibit loans, and send portable exhibits to a minimum of 175 focused events per year.

Develop new Internet sites to inform the public of exhibits available for loan by the first quarter of FY 02.

### **Outreach Initiatives**

#### **Goal:**

Increase specific segments of the population's awareness of NASA's missions and relevance in their lives through participation at public forums and events.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

Analyze polls, studies, and statistics regarding specific segments of the population's interest in the space program and related technical fields.

Organize partnerships with groups that have similar goals – Government, industry, associations, and media – to expand the reach and leverage of resources.

Work with appropriate Program and Functional Offices in expanding outreach and recruitment efforts for specific segments of the population in areas where they are generally under-represented, such as in space science, physics, astronomy, and engineering.



Identify, package, and deliver information that is relevant and inspiring to increase the public's understanding of science and technology, particularly specific segments of the population. Information is to be distributed directly (Internet Web sites, exhibits, speakers, conventions, letters, launch viewing, briefings, meetings) or indirectly (print and broadcast media, major motion pictures, talk shows).

**Metrics:**

Using 1999 data as a baseline, increase by 5 percent the number of audiences reached each year through NASA's participation at, or in national organizations, forums and events, whose missions are specifically aligned with NASA's mission.

Using 1999 data as a baseline, increase by 5 percent the number of links to NASA Web sites from Web sites of interest to specific segments of the population.

#### **IV. New Code P Organizational Structure**

After extensive internal and external review of the Code P organizational structure, the Office's senior management decided to refine management processes and create a new Division -- Program Operations.

This Division encompasses the PAO's, most of whom are co-located in Program Offices, who develop intricate media strategies for the Agency's programs. Creating the new Division allows for efficient management practices while maintaining the special relationship between the Associate Administrator for Public Affairs and the PAO's. The PAO's report to the Director, Program Operations Division, and have direct access to the Associate Administrator and Deputy Associate Administrator for Public Affairs.

#### **OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS (CODE P)**

